



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***GOVERNORS NAPOLITANO AND RICHARDSON LAUNCH
SOUTHWEST CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE***

Arizona, New Mexico team up to protect regional water supplies, reduce emissions

WASHINGTON – Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano and New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson today signed an agreement launching the Southwest Climate Change Initiative, which establishes a framework for the two states to collaborate on strategies to address the effects of climate change in the Southwest and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

Under the Initiative, Arizona and New Mexico will collaborate on a number of climate change-related actions, including: development of consistent approaches for measuring, forecasting and reporting greenhouse gas emissions; giving credit for greenhouse gas reduction actions; identifying options for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; promoting climate change mitigation actions, energy efficient technologies and clean and renewable energy sources that enhance economic growth; and advocating for regional and national climate policies that reflect the needs and interests of Southwestern states.

In the document establishing the Initiative, the Governors declare that “Southwestern states have particular concerns about the impacts of climate change and climate variability on residents, businesses and the environment, including the potential for prolonged drought, severe forest fires, warmer temperatures, increased snowmelt, reduced snowpack and other effects.”

They also state that “actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as energy conservation and development of renewable energy sources, may have multiple benefits, including economic development, job creation, cost savings and improved air quality that are not limited to state boundaries.”

“In the Southwest, water is absolutely essential to our quality of life and our economy,” said Governor Richardson. “Addressing climate change now, before it is too late, is the responsible thing to do to protect our water supplies for future generations.”

“In the absence of real action at the federal level, states are stepping forward to address the serious issues presented by climate change,” Governor Napolitano said. “Governor Richardson and I want to ensure that our states work closely together as we review and implement the recommendations that will come from our respective Climate Change Advisory Groups. We also will continue to exchange information and ideas about ways to deal with the impacts of climate change across the Southwest.”

Governors Napolitano and Richardson each issued Executive Orders in 2005 creating stakeholder-based Climate Change Advisory Groups (CCAG). The groups are charged with developing recommendations for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in their respective states. The Arizona CCAG is scheduled to make its recommendations by the end of June this year; the New Mexico group will report by December. New Mexico has also joined the Chicago Climate Exchange, becoming the first state in the nation to sign up for this greenhouse gas emission reduction and trading program.

The Governors signed this agreement today in Washington during the National Governor's Association Winter Meeting.